

# PTSD IMPACT PROGRAM EMPLOYING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING

# Why A New Approach

According to a recent, independent, and the most comprehensive study of PTSD to date\*, significant gaps exist for both the adequate delivery of treatment for PTSD and the availability of effective, proven treatments.

The same study estimates that more effective . . . "care for PTSD and major depression could save as much as \$1.7 billion" over 2 years.

Study concluded that "more research is also needed to evaluate innovative treatment methods, since not all individuals benefit from the currently available treatments."

\*Invisible Wounds of War: Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, Their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery, The Center for Military Health Policy Research, the RAND Corporation, 2008

## We intend to demonstrate:

- The **validity** of Transformational Learning to impact the aftermath of trauma in the effectiveness of combat personnel
- That being able to work with **large groups**, will prove to be a cost and time efficient approach.
- a dramatic
  - **Acceleration** of the rate of **re-assimilation**
  - **improvement** in interpersonal and family **relations**
  - **enhancement** of capacity to **perform duties**
  - **elevation** of their experience of **peace of mind**
  - **decrease** in the severity of **depression**

Note: As a start, the initial approach will be conducted for individuals with primary diagnosis of uncomplicated PTSD

# What Makes This Different

## (Simplified Version)

### **Traditional/Current Learning Model**

- People's attitude and behavior is a direct effect of their past (experiences, environment, upbringing, culture, education, etc.)

### **Transformational Learning Model**

- The past has nothing to do with how one is or acts in the present!
- People's attitude and behavior is determined by the future they have or are living into
- Much of the past is in the past. However, the "traumatic" or "incomplete" past is in the future and hence, is part of the future one is living into
- Recognizing the experience or past that is in the future frees one from the past based conclusions and decisions which have been determining one's attitudes, behavior, action and results
- This leaves room for a new created future which produces new attitudes, behaviors, action and results!
- What allows for this: The future is comprised of or at least accessible through language

# Transformational Learning

**“Transformative learning provides people with the opportunity to become aware of the interpretations and beliefs that they hold as ‘the way it is’. That is, to critically reflect on the underlying assumptions that constitutes their worldview and frames of reference. Transformative learning explores the way people see their world, circumstances, problems and challenges - its origins, internal logic – as well as assess the costs and benefits, and advantages and disadvantages, associated with their particular worldview and frames of reference. In true transformative learning one’s worldview and one’s frames of reference are transformed, constraints to full self-expression released, and as a consequence, new more powerful ways of being and acting become available.”**

Reference drawn from: “Learning as Transformation” - Jack Mezirow and Associates

# Advantages of Transformational Learning

- **Linguistic** basis allows **access** to underlying issues
- **Educational**, hence without **stigma**
- **Group approach** allows individuals to see themselves in others' experience and **lessens feeling different/alone**
- Leaves people with new found **freedom** and a **choice** over the way they behave
- Has been **reliably employed** worldwide for over 30 years in large group educational settings and in organizations to **dramatically impact individual and group performance**

# Testimonial

"After years of being in the Navy and being at sea, I developed symptoms that today would likely be characterized as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (which had not been identified as a disease during my tenure in the U.S. Navy). My symptoms included disorientation, profound sadness, and clinical depression.

In mid career, I attended a personal development program employing a transformational learning approach quite different from the traditional therapies I had been engaged in. As a result, I was able to end my fear, discover my own voice and become fully adult. I saw that I had been operating on top of a dead soul.

In its stead, I gained the power to invent a new possibility and future for myself so I could actually do my job as a military officer and as a husband and father..."

\* A New Model for Effective Treatment of PTSD in the Armed Forces of the United States, A statement by Captain Wyman Howard II, Retired . In 1995, Captain Howard, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, completed a distinguished 34-year career in the U.S. Navy. Among the highlights were commissioning and commanding the USS Simpson (FFG56); Deputy Program Manager for the Aegis Cruiser and Destroyer Construction Project; and commissioning and commanding the Aegis Cruiser USS Anzio (CG68).